



SYNOPSIS.

Fran arrives at Hamilton Gregory's home in Farmington, and finds him in a state of confusion. He is told that his father, Mr. Gregory, has been killed. Fran is shocked and tries to find out what has happened. He is told that his father was killed by a train. Fran is then taken to the hospital, where he is told that his father is dead. Fran is then taken to the funeral home, where he is told that his father is dead. Fran is then taken to the funeral home, where he is told that his father is dead.

CHAPTER XVI.—Continued.

Gregory held the awful secret quivering upon her lips. The danger drove him mad. "You devil!" he shouted, rushing upon her. Fran stood immovable, her eyes fastened on his. "Don't strike me," she said, "don't strike me, I warn you, unless you tell me the first blow." He staggered back as if her words possessed physical impact. He shrunk in a heap in the library chair and dropped his head upon his arms. "To prevent Grace from learning the truth, he could have done almost anything in that first moment of intense terror; but he could not strike Fran."

In the meantime, Mrs. Gregory had been ascending the stairs. They could hear her now, as she softly moved along the hall. No one in the library wished, at that moment, to confront the wife, and absolute silence reigned in the apartment. They heard her pause, when opposite the door, doubtless to assure herself that the typewriter was at work. If she did not hear the clicking of the keys, she might conclude Grace was absent, and enter.

Gregory raised his haggard head with an air suggesting meditated flight. Even Grace covered back instinctively.

Swift as a shadow, Fran darted on tiptoe to the typewriter, and began pounding upon it vigorously.

Mrs. Gregory passed on her way, and when she reached the farther end of the hall, an old hymn which she had been humming, broke into audible words. Fran snatched the sheet from the typewriter, and bent her head to listen. The words were soft, full of a thrilling faith, a dauntless courage—

"Still all my song shall be
Nearer my God to Thee,
Nearer—"



FRAN

BY JOHN BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS

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Fran looked at her father inscrutably. "I believe, after this," she said, "it will be safe to leave you two together."

CHAPTER XVII.

Shall the Secret Be Told?

Fran had expected Robert Clinton's return in four or five days, as had Grace. But, secreted that have been buried for many years are not picked up in a day. However, had the chairman of the school-board returned the day after his departure, Abbott Ashton would have met him at the station. Twice, in the opinion of Fran, the young man had failed her by allowing Grace's mind to flash to important discoveries along the path of his insulated remarks about the weather. This third test was more exact, since he was to deal with no Grace Noir, merely with a man.

As Littleburg had only one railroad and it a "branch," it was not difficult



"Business—Very Pressing—See You Later."

to meet every train; moreover, Miss Sapphira's latest notes from her brother kept Abbott advised. At first, Miss Sapphira said: "It will be a week," later—"Then days more—and the business left like this!" Then came the final bulletin: "I may come tomorrow. Look for me when you see me."

What the secret was that Abbott must prevent Clinton from divulging, he did not care to guess; doubtless the picture of Gregory's past, with its face to the wall, might be inscribed, "Some other woman." For surely Grace Noir was some other woman.

With these thoughts, Abbott met the evening train, to see Robert Clinton hastily emerge from the solitude he had endured in the midst of many.

Robert was in no pacific mood, and when he found himself almost in the arms of Abbott, his greeting was boisterous because impatient at being stopped. Abbott, knowing that Robert was not ordinarily effusive, thought, "He has the secret!"

Robert shook hands without delaying progress toward the waiting hack, bearing Abbott along on waves of greeting.

"But surely you are not going to ride!" Abbott expostulated. "Business—very pressing—see you later."

"But I have business with you, Mr. Clinton, that can't wait. Come, walk with me to town and I'll explain; it'll delay you only a few minutes."

Like a restive horse on finding himself restrained, Robert Clinton lifted a leg without advancing. "Oh, very well," he agreed. "In fact, I've something important for you, old fellow, and I'll explain before I—before the—yes, before," he ended, turning his back with a smothered growl.

"Lucky I was at the station!" Abbott exclaimed, "since you've something to tell me, Bob. What is it?" In thus addressing his old friend as "Bob" the young man was officially declaring that their relationship as teacher and school-director was for ever at an end, and they stood as man to man.

Clinton spoke rapidly, with his wonted briskness: "Guess you know I've been knocking about the country for the last three or four weeks—saw a good many old friends—a fellow can't go anywhere without meeting somebody he knows—curious, isn't it? Well, I've just got an opening for you. You know how sorry I am because we had to plump another teacher on to your job, but don't you worry if Fran did hold your hand—just you keep your hands in your pockets after this, when there's danger—Say! I've got something lots better for you than Littleburg. School out in Oklahoma—rich—private man behind it—he owns the whole plant, and he's determined to

run it to suit the new ideas. This rich man—chum of mine—went West, bought land, sat on it, got up with his jeans full of money. Wants you to come at once."

Abbott was elated. "What kind of new ideas, Bob?" he asked joyously. "Of that impractical nonsense of teaching life instead of books. You know what I mean, but I don't think I do. Don't worry about it now—something terrible's on my mind—just awful! I can't think of anything else. What you want to do is to scout out to Tahleah, Oklahoma, to this address—here's his card—tell 'em Bob sent you—"

He looked at Abbott feverishly, as if almost hoping Abbott would bolt for Tahleah then and there. His broad red face was set determinedly.

"This news is splendid!" Abbott declared enthusiastically. "I had already applied for a country school; I was afraid I had lost out a whole year, on account of—everything. I must thank—"

"Abbott, I don't want to be thanked. I haven't got time to be thanked. You're the Hamilton Gregory's house and that's where I'm bound—good night—"

"But, Bob, I haven't told you my business—"

"I'll hear it later, old fellow—dear old fellow—I think a heap of you, old Abbott. But I must go now—"

"No, you mustn't. Before you go into that house, we must have a little talk. We can't talk here—people are coming and going—"

"I don't want to talk here, Bob. I want to go in that house. My business is private and pressing." The gate was but a few yards away; he looked at it fixedly, but Abbott held his hand upon the agitated arm.

"Bob, what I have to tell you can't wait, and that's all about it. I won't keep you long, just turn down this alley with me, for it's a matter of life and death—"

"Confound your life and death! My business is life and death, too!"

At that moment, a light was turned on in Gregory's library, and Grace Noir was seen to pass the window.

Abbott's hand tightened on the other's arm, as he urged, "Down that alley, a nice dark place for talking—"

"Nice dark," he hanged! growled Robert. "What business can you have with me that wouldn't wait till morning? Look here, I'm desperate!"

"So am I," retorted Abbott. "Bob, you've been to Springfield?"

Robert Clinton snatched open the yard-gate, muttering, "That's my business—"

"Miss Noir sent you to unearth a secret?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Robert, in an altered tone, stopping in the gateway. "Did she tell you about it?"

"No—but you've brought back that secret, and you must not tell it to Miss Noir."

"Not tell her? That's funny!" Robert produced a sound which he expected to pass as laughter. "So that's what you wanted to tell me, is it? Do you know what the secret is?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

SUICIDES, MALE AND FEMALE

Three German Men to One Woman Kill Themselves, According to Prussian Statistics.

If Prussian statistics give any idea of the relative proportion, then women must be much fonder of life than men, for more than three men commit suicide for every woman who takes her own life.

According to the Berlin correspondent of the Lancet, the number of suicides in Prussia showed a slight decrease during the year 1911, when 21 cases were registered for each 100,000 of the population, as compared with 22 in 1910. The actual number of persons who took their own lives was 8,422, of whom 6,394 were men and 2,028 were women.

The relatively highest proportion of suicides—namely, 35 for each 100,000—occurred in the province of Brandenburg; next came Berlin, with 32 per 100,000.

The tendency to commit suicide increases with the age, the proportion per 100,000 at various age periods being as follows: Between fifteen and twenty-five years, 26; between thirty and forty years, 23; between sixty and seventy years, 52; between seventy



"I do not. But you mustn't tell it."

"However, that's what I'm going to do, as soon as I reach that door—take your hand off, man, my blood's up, by George! Can't you see my blood's up? It's a-bubbling, that's what it's doing! So all you want is to ask me not to tell that secret?"

"Not exactly all."

"Well, well—quick! What else?"

"To see that you don't tell it."

"How do you mean to 'see' that I don't tell it?"

"You will listen to reason, Bob," said Abbott persuasively.

"No, I won't!" cried Robert. "Not me! No, sir! I'm going to tell this minute."

"You shall not!" said Abbott, in a lower and more compelling tone. His manner was so absolute, that Robert Clinton, who had forced his way almost to the porch-steps, was slightly moved.

"See here, Abbott—say! Fran knows all about it, and you pretend to think a good deal of her. Well, it's to her interests for the whole affair to be laid open to the world."

"I think so much of Fran," was the low and earnest rejoinder, "that if I were better fixed, I'd ask her to marry me without a moment's delay. And I think enough of her, not to ask her to marry me, until I have a good position. Now it was Fran who asked me to see that you didn't betray the secret. And I think so much of her, that I'm going to see that you don't!"

For a moment Clinton was silent; then he said in desperation: "Where is your nice dark alley? Come on, then, let's get in it!"

When they were safe from interruption, Clinton resumed: "You tell me that Fran wants that secret kept? I'd think she'd want it told everywhere. This secret is nothing at all but the wrong that was done Fran and her mother. And since you are so frank about how you like Fran, I'll follow suit and say that I have asked Grace Noir to marry me, and I know I'll stand a better show by getting her out of the hypnotic spell of that miserable scoundrel who poses as a bleeding sheep—"

Abbott interrupted: "The wrong done Fran? How do you mean?"

"Why, man, that—that hypocrite in wool, that weed that infects the ground, that—"

"In short, Mr. Gregory? But what about the wrong done Fran?"

"Ain't I telling you? That worm-eaten pillar of the church that's made me lose so much faith in religion that I ain't got enough left worth the postage stamp to mail it back to the revival meeting where it came from—"

"For heaven's sake, Bob, tell me what wrong Mr. Gregory did Fran?"

"Didn't he marry Fran's mother when he was a college chap in Springfield, and then desert her? Didn't he marry again, although his first wife—Fran's mother—was living, and hadn't been divorced? Don't he refuse to acknowledge Fran as his daughter, making her pass herself off as the daughter of some old college chum? That's what he did, your chieftain! I'd like to see that baton of his laid over his back; I'd like to lay it, myself."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

STOP THAT BACKACHE

There's nothing more discouraging than a constant backache. You are lame when you awake. Pains pierce you when you bend or lift. It's hard to rest and next day it's the same old story.

Pain in the back is nature's warning of kidney ills. Neglect may pave the way to dropsy, gravel, or other serious kidney sickness.

Don't delay—begin using Doan's Kidney Pills—the remedy that has been curing backache and kidney trouble for over fifty years.

A MICHIGAN CASE

"Every Picture Tells a Story." Peter Loucks, 12-year-old, of Frankfort, Mich., says: "I had awful backaches brought on by hard work. I couldn't control the lower sections and in the morning I was lame and tired. I could hardly get out of bed. My back ached terribly and if I tried to stoop, I had sharp twinges. I often got so dizzy that I almost fainted over. After the doctors had failed, I tried Doan's Kidney Pills and six boxes cured me."

Get Doan's at Any Store, 50c a Box. DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS. FOSTER-MILBURN CO., BUFFALO, N. Y.

Right Place to Calm Down. Editor—What's the trouble out there?

Office Boy—A woman out in the hall has hysterics.

Editor—Have her escorted into the composing room, at once.

Previous Engagement. Erb—"Got a job for you at last, BILL. Must see the boss at nine tomorrow morning, sharp!" Bill—"Can't go. I've promised to carry the flag in the unemployed procession!"—John Bull.

Marks on Life's Pathway. Wife—"We have been married twelve years, and not once have I missed baking you a cake on your birthday. Have I, dear?"

Hubby—No, my pet. I can look back upon those cakes as milestones in my life.

A Natural Inference. "Johnny, did the whale swallow Jonah?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"What makes you think so, Johnny?"

"That's the only way the whale could have carried him, ma'am."

Pastor to Blame. The church choir had resigned, and the parson asked what was the cause of the trouble.

"Well," replied one of the officers, "you have yourself to blame. You know you said, 'Providence having seen fit to afflict all of our choir with bad colds, let us join in singing, 'Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow.'"

Peculiar Belief. Two centuries have passed since the Scottish judge Lord Monboddo was born. In his "Origin and Progress of Language" he argued that human beings should be studied like other animals; but this doctrine seemed to the contemporaries of Dr. Johnson so ridiculous that the wags based many a jest upon it. His belief that men got rid of their tails by sitting upon them would now scarcely raise a smile among anthropologists. Among his more startling propositions was the earnestly maintained one that the orang-outang "was a class of the human species, and that its want of speech was merely accidental."

Only William. At a singing contest at Frankfort recently Kaiser Wilhelm, who attended, was served by several high school boys as pages. According to Jugend, he was attracted by the bright face of one of them and asked his name.

"Korner, your majesty," said the boy.

"And your first name is Theodore?" said the emperor, thinking of the patriot-poet Theodore Korner, whose centennial year this is.

"I'm sorry," replied the uncourtly youngster, "but it's only William."

When Kaiser William broke into a hearty laugh at the answer the page realized his missed opportunity.—New York Evening Post.

SPEAKS FOR ITSELF Experience of a Southern Man.

"Please allow me to thank the originator of Postum, which in my case, speaks for itself," writes a Fla. man. "I formerly drank so much coffee that my nervous system was almost a wreck." (Tea is just as injurious because it contains caffeine, the drug found in coffee.) "My physician told me to quit drinking it but I had to have something, so I tried Postum."

"To my great surprise I saw quite a change in my nerves in about 10 days. That was a year ago and now my nerves are steady and I don't have those bilious sick headaches which I regularly had while drinking coffee."

"Postum seems to have body-building properties and leaves the head clear. And I do not have the bad taste in my mouth when I get up mornings. When Postum is boiled good and strong, it is far better in taste than coffee. My advice to coffee drinkers is to try Postum and be convinced."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Write for copy of the little book, "The Road to Wellville."

Postum comes in two forms: Regular Postum—must be well boiled.

Instant Postum is a soluble powder. A teaspoonful dissolves quickly in a cup of hot water and, with cream and sugar, makes a delicious beverage instantly. Grocers sell both kinds.

"There's a reason" for Postum.